

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION CHECKLIST

Project: Pine Hills Preserve Fuels Reduction Plan **Date:** August 20, 2007

Nature of Action: Provide \$32,000 to the Bureau of Land Management to develop a plan to reduce the amount of fuels lad at strategic areas of the Pine Hills Preserve (Preserve).

Location: The 4,042-acre Preserve is located in the central Sierra foothills in western El Dorado County (EDC), north of Highway 50 and southeast of Folsom Lake (See Figure), approximately 30 miles east of Sacramento, and in portions of Sections 2 and 3 of T9N, R9E, portions of Sections 4-7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 18 and 34 of T10N R9E, a portion of Section 36 of T11N R8E and portions of Sections 29-32 of T11N R9E of the Mount Diablo Base and Meridian.

Exclusion Category: B (10): Approval of land management plans where the implementation will only result in minor construction activities and associated operation and maintenance activities.

Evaluation of Criteria for Categorical Exclusion

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | This action or group of actions will have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. | No <u>✓</u> Uncertain <u> </u> Yes <u> </u> |
| 2. | This action or group of actions will have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. | No <u>✓</u> Uncertain <u> </u> Yes <u> </u> |
| 3. | This action will have significant impacts on public health or safety. | No <u>✓</u> Uncertain <u> </u> Yes <u> </u> |
| 4. | This action will have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking | No <u>✓</u> Uncertain <u> </u> Yes <u> </u> |

water aquifers; prime farmlands;
wetlands (Executive Order 11990);
floodplains (Executive Order
11988); national monuments;
migratory birds; and other
ecologically significant or critical
areas.

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 5. | This action will have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uncertain__ Yes __ |
| 6. | This action will establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.. | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uncertain__ Yes __ |
| 7. | This action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant environmental effects. | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uncertain__ Yes __ |
| 8. | This action will have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by bureau or office | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uncertain__ Yes __ |
| 9. | This action will have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uncertain__ Yes __
On June 21, 2007, Reclamation initiated informal consultation with the Service on the activities for projects in the CVPCP and the HRP for Fiscal Year 2007. The Service concurred on August 21, 2007 that the projects, including this Pine Hills plan, are not likely to adversely affect listed species. |
| 10. | This action threatens to violate Federal, state, local, or tribal law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment. | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Uncertain__ Yes __ |

11. This action will have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). No ☒ Uncertain__ Yes __
12. This action will limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites. No ☒ Uncertain__ Yes __
13. This action will affect Indian Trust Assets (To be completed by Reclamation official responsible for ITAs) No ☒ Uncertain__ Yes __
14. This action will contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species. (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112) No ☒ Uncertain__ Yes __

NEPA Action: Categorical Exclusion ☒ EA __ EIS __

Environmental commitments, explanation, and/or remarks:

The Preserve was established through partnering of government and private entities to protect native habitat supporting numerous federally listed plant species, and is formed by five non-contiguous units that stretch over a 20,000-acre area of the gabbro soil formation.

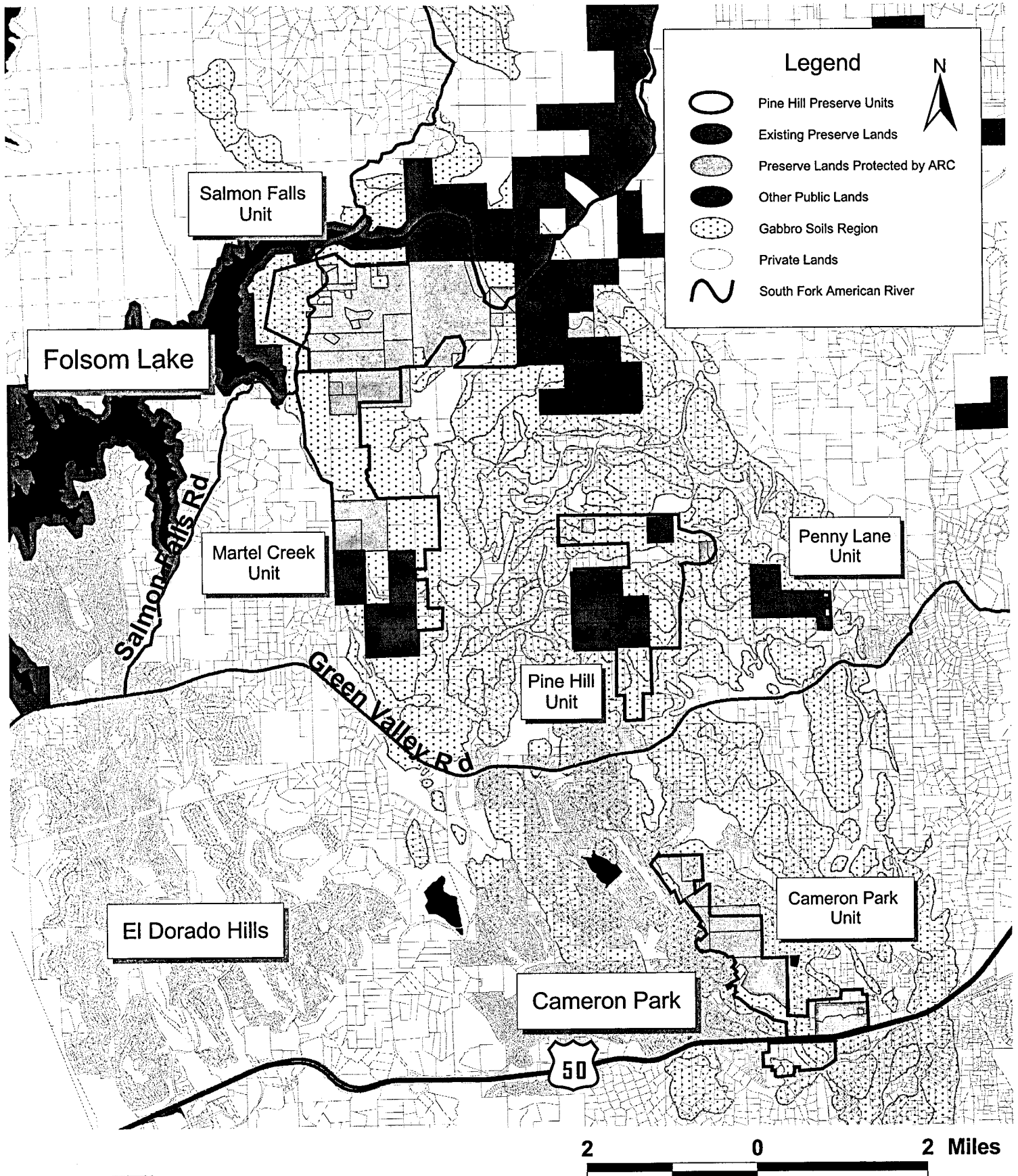
Numerous rare and federally listed plant species occur on the preserve including the federally endangered El Dorado bedstraw (*Galium californicum* ssp. *sierrae*), Pine Hill ceanothus (*Ceanothus roderickii*), Pine Hill flannelbush (*Fremontodendron californicum* ssp. *decumbens*), Stebbins' morning glory (*Calystegia stebbinsii*) and the federally threatened Layne's butterweed (*Packera layneae*). Some of these species have evolved with fire and require an adequate fire regime to germinate, successfully establish and/or reproduce. Furthermore, all the rare plants at the Preserve require some kind of disturbance to proliferate and, without fire or other disturbance mechanisms, the rare plants may decline and eventually become extinct. However, because Preserve boundaries interface with urban and suburban development, safety to human life and property are major considerations and constitute a tremendous challenge for effective vegetation management through fire related activities.

The excessive accumulation of fuel (from a combination of dense trees, shrubs and/or grasses, dead and alive) at some of the Preserve areas not only reduces rare plant habitat quality but also increases the chances of catastrophic fire that may be detrimental to rare plants (due to excessive heat in the soil and vegetation layers), human life and property. The development of a Fuels Reduction Plan will also include viable alternatives, other than fire, to reduce the excessive fuels load at strategic areas within the Preserve.

BLM will:

- 1) Develop a general Fuels Reduction Plan for the different units at the Preserve.
- 2) Identify particular needs, including evaluation of Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies (RAMS), for reducing fuels loads at each of the Preserve units.
- 3) Initiate implementation of fuels reduction activities at areas with the highest risk of catastrophic wildfire events.
- 4) Monitor response of habitat and rare plant species to fuels reduction activities.
- 5) Conduct education and outreach activities in areas surrounding the Preserve, to seek support and cooperation from neighbors regarding fuel reduction activities

Pine Hill Ecological Reserve



American River Conservancy

Prepared by:

Douglas Kleinmuth
Environmental Specialist

Date: 8-22-07

Regional Archeologist concurrence:

see attachment

Date: _____

ITA Designee concurrence:

see attachment

Date: _____

Concurrence:

John Thorne
CVPCP/HCP Program Manager

Date: 8-30-07

Approved:

Susan M. Fry
Regional Environmental Officer

Date: 9-4-07

From: Adam Nickels
To: Kleinsmith, Douglas
Date: 8/31/2007 4:22:10 PM
Subject: CEC Pine Hills Preserve Fuels Reduction Plan

Project No. 07-SCAO-310

Dough

The proposed project to provide funding to the Bureau of Land Management to develop a plan to reduce the amount of fuels lad at strategic areas in the Pine Hills Preserve has no potential to affect historic properties pursuant to the regulations at 36 CFR Part 800.3(a)(1).

The proposed action is administrative in nature. Please not that implementation of portions of that plan may result in actions that have the potential to affect historic properties and the BLM will be responsible for complying with the Section 106 responsibilities.

I concur with line 7 of the CEC Pine Hills Preserve Fuels Reduction Plan Dated August 20, 2007.

Location: Pine Hills Reserve (California)

Exclusion Category: B(10)

This concludes the Section 106 responsibilities for this undertaking. Please retain a copy of this concurrence with the CEC file. Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on this undertaking.

Sincerely,

Adam Nickels

Adam M. Nickels
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U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
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CC: MP-153

From: Patricia Rivera
To: Kleinsmith, Douglas
Date: 8/31/2007 11:42:59 AM
Subject: Re: CVPCP 2007 CECs ITA Requests

Doug,

I have reviewed the six Categorical Exclusion Checklists for the CVPCP projects per your request . All are studies, plans, or community outreach with no construction, land purchase or surface disturbance.

The Pine Hills Preserve fuels reduction plan: The proposed action does not affect Indian Trust Assets. The nearest ITA to the proposed site is approximately 3 miles ESE and it is the Shingle Springs Rancheria.

The Tipton kangaroo rat relocation study: The proposed action does not affect Indian Trust Assets. The nearest ITA to the proposed site is approximately 28 miles ENE and it is the Tule River Reservation.

The California tiger salamander genetics study: The proposed action does not affect Indian Trust Assets. The nearest ITA to the proposed site is approximately 35 miles WNW and it is the Lytton Rancheria.

The Alameda County private ranches outreach: The proposed action does not affect Indian Trust Assets. The nearest ITA to the proposed site is approximately 38 miles WNW and it is the Lytton Rancheria.

The riparian brush rabbit genetics study: The proposed action does not affect Indian Trust Assets. The nearest ITA to the proposed site is approximately 26 miles SSW and it is a Public Domain Allotment.

The propagation and reproduction of the metcalf jewelflower study: The proposed action does not affect Indian Trust Assets. The nearest ITA to the proposed site is approximately 35 miles SE and it is the a Public Domain Allotment.

Patricia

>>> Douglas Kleinsmith 8/23/2007 2:50 PM >>>

Patricia,

Attached are ITA requests for the six Categorical Exclusion Checklists for the CVPCP projects. All are studies, plans, or community outreach with no construction, land purchase or surface disturbance.

Doug